

Flippo's Guest Cabin CT-1301

2148 Cedar Road, Scientists' Cliffs, Port Republic (Calvert County)

1938, private access

Flippo's Guest Cabin, located within the Scientist's Cliffs subdivision near Port Republic, Maryland and constructed in 1938, is a small, one-story rustic log cabin set within Scientists' Cliffs, a mid-twentieth century residential subdivision bordering on the Chesapeake Bay in Calvert County. Flippo's Guest Cabin features extensive landscape elements and an expansive view. Scientists' Cliffs serves as an example of a twentieth century residential neighborhood of vacation homes, with important landscape features and as a significant example of a twentieth century subdivision of vacation homes, an important property type in the history of American architecture and community planning. Scientists' Cliffs continues to serve as a unique historic resource that is distinct in Calvert County. In addition, Flippo's Guest Cabin is associated with the Gravatt family, who played an important role in the founding of Scientists' Cliffs.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. CT-1301

1. Name of Property

(indicate preferred name)

historic Flipppo's Guest Cabin

other Hesh/Margry Cabin

2. Location

street and number 2148 Cedar Road not for publication

city, town Port Republic X vicinity

county Calvert

3. Owner of Property

(give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Linda Hesh & Henricus Margry

street and number 4115 28th Street telephone 301.864.0856

city, town Mount Rainier state MD zip code

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. liber BJS folio 1105/185

city, town tax map 28A tax parcel Lot 22 tax ID number 01-048732

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☐ Contributing Resource in National Register District
☐ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
☐ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Recorded by HABS/HAER
☐ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
☒ Other: Scientists' Cliffs archival collection

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	Contributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	<u>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> defense	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> domestic	<u> </u> structures
		<input type="checkbox"/> education	<u> </u> objects
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	<u>1</u> Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	
		<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	
		<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
		<input type="checkbox"/> social	
		<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown	
		<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use	
		<input type="checkbox"/> other:	
			Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory
			<u>0</u>

7. Description

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Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Flippo's Guest Cabin, located within the Scientist's Cliffs subdivision near Port Republic, Maryland was constructed in 1938, according to the current owner. The cabin is set within Scientists' Cliffs, a mid-twentieth century residential subdivision bordering on the Chesapeake Bay in Calvert County. The cabin sits atop a cliff above the Bay and features extensive landscape plantings and an expansive view.

The cabin is a one story rustic wood frame cabin, with a basement, concrete foundation and gable roof. The cabin is clad with its original vertical log exterior. The building's primary or eastern facade features a deep overhanging gable and a central entrance, consisting of a wood door with a fixed nine-pane window, set centrally beneath the gable peak. The entrance is flanked on both sides by two pairs of large, double pane replacement windows which creates a band of windows across the facade. The door opens onto a deck with wood posts and railing. The deck is set atop the concrete basement, which projects beyond the east wall of the first floor and features two pairs of double pane replacement windows on the east façade and a single sliding sash window on the north and south elevations.

The south elevation contains a pair of large, double pane replacement windows in the southeast corner. A single fixed pane window is set in the southwest corner. In the southeast corner on the basement level, there is a wood enclosure attached to the building that has an exterior shower, faced on one side by a series of louvers and covered with a corrugated metal shed roof.

The openings on the west elevation are arranged asymmetrically. A four panel door with five lights at the top, framed in wood with a glass storm door, and a single rectangular fixed pane window are located to the north of the gable peak; a pair of rectangular fixed pane windows is located on the south side.

A pair of rectangular single sash sliding windows is located in the far eastern edge of the north elevation. Three regularly spaced rectangular fixed pane windows are placed along the north wall. A wood walkway placed along the north elevation and supported by wood posts with lattice infill from below, provide a means of accessing the deck on the east side from the west. The raised walkway obscures two rectangular fixed pane windows which provide light and ventilation to the basement level.

The interior is a single, open space which has a kitchen area in the southeast corner and a central cabinet unit used for storage. Stairs in the southwest corner lead down to the basement area which features two bedrooms along the front, a water closet, a bathroom and mechanical space.

8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____

Specific dates 1938

Architect/Builder Harold Matteson

Construction dates 1938

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register

☐ Maryland Register

☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

The Hesh/Margry Cabin, also known as Flippo's Guest Cabin, is set within Scientists' Cliffs. The community of Scientists' Cliffs serves as an example of a progressive twentieth century residential neighborhood with important landscape features and as a significant example of a twentieth century subdivision, an important residential settlement type in the history of American architecture and community planning. Scientists' Cliffs continues to serve as a unique historic resource which is distinctly different from the surrounding area. In addition, the Hesh/Margry Cabin is associated with the Gravatt family, who played an important role in the founding of Scientists' Cliffs.

The structure was built in 1938 by Harold Matteson, who also constructed other cabins at Scientists' Cliffs. The cabin was occupied by "day trippers" and was also rented out – many of its occupants were prospective buyers in the subdivision, who later built cabins in Scientists' Cliffs. The guest cabin was later purchased for private use.

Scientists' Cliffs was founded in 1935 by George "Flippo" Gravatt and his wife, Annie Evelyn Rathburn, who were both forest pathologists at the Department of Agriculture. Flippo Gravatt was familiar with the area due to his extensive studies of a collection of nearby blighted American Chestnut trees. Starting with an initial allocation of 238 acres in 1935 (purchased from Marmaduke White of Baltimore), the Gravatts acquired more that 750 acres by 1961. The original purchase area includes portions of the Scientists' Cliffs community known as Gates B and C.

Flippo Gravatt founded Scientists' Cliffs with the intention of creating an affordable vacation and residential community that would also promote the protection of the natural environment and advancement of science. In the fall of 1935, Flippo Gravatt hosted a picnic for his fellow plant scientists at the Department of Agriculture. At the site of the future subdivision, Gravatt announced the formation of an exclusive community of scientists and their families. Gravatt and Rathburn built the first house on the site in the spring of 1936, known as "Chestnut Cabin" (which now serves as a community center), out of blight-killed chestnut trees. Following the construction of the Chestnut Cabin, Gravatt constructed five small cabins for the use of day and weekend guests, many of whom were "sold" on the community and became eventual members and owners. The Scientists' Cliffs Association was officially incorporated in

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1937 with the mission of promoting interest in the natural sciences, maintaining a library and fossil museum, protecting natural areas, and organizing scientific lectures and field trips. The fossils at Scientists' Cliffs also served as a research interest, and many of the fossils have been incorporated into the fireplaces of homes throughout the community. The Scientists' Cliffs Association initially included restrictive bylaws in which all members (property owners) were required to be scientists. This bylaw was later relaxed to include those with college degrees, and then to include those without formal college education but who had demonstrated professional distinction. The community was popular as a summer family vacation area, and has gained an increasing number of year-round residents. The Scientists' Cliffs community now includes over 200 residences.

Horticulture was a central focus in the landscape design of Scientists' Cliffs. In addition to maintaining undeveloped woodlands, this activity consisted of planting filberts, bamboo, figs, blight-resistant hybrid Chinese chestnuts, grapes, and fruit trees. Additionally, over 70 varieties of azaleas were planted at the site. The community itself was founded as a result of Flippo Gravatt's interest in horticultural pathology, and the blighted trees on site were used to construct some of the earliest buildings. Landscape architecture is an important historic theme at Scientists' Cliffs – which is evident in both the master planning and siting of houses within the existing natural setting – as well as in the highly unusual variety of horticultural elements.

Cabins and houses were not only set within an existing natural setting, but were also built from logs cut and milled at an onsite mill. "The decision was for log construction. A sawmill that produced logs was installed. The first few cabins were built of blight-killed chestnut. Subsequent cabins were built of tulip poplar or pine logs. In the mid-fifties log construction gave way to wood siding." Flippo Gravatt brought Harold Matteson to Scientists' Cliffs to run the sawmill and provide construction services. Matteson's father also built furniture and interior cabinets for many of the early homes. Bert Miles also built several early homes. Dickey Wallace undertook the construction of unique sandstone fireplaces for several early homes. Gravatt also brought Joseph Showalter, who had served as a plant pathologist at Virginia Polytechnic, to build homes and to run the nursery, which included over 70 varieties of azaleas.¹

Scientists' Cliffs served as an early attempt to create a community of vacation homes that operated on a sustainable ecological philosophy. Such an ecological philosophy was distinctly different from large-scale "tract" residential subdivisions common to the early and mid twentieth century – however, the notions of social progress expressed by the founders and residents of Scientists' Cliffs were part of an important trend of Progressivism, a broad social movement that sought alternative strategies for urban communities that was particularly active during the 1930s. This Progressive notion has been maintained by an active community organization at Scientists' Cliffs. A contemporary local history notes that "the original effort,

¹ "A Dream Realized," 3.

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maintained throughout the years, was to create a very different sort of community, one that would be as simple and inexpensive as possible, a place where people of comparable means and similar tastes might relax beside the Bay.”²

The Scientists’ Cliffs community was affected by World War II, as fuel for the long motor trips from Washington DC was rationed, and many owners rented cabins to nearby servicemen. After World War II, Scientists’ Cliffs Road, leading to the community from Route 4, which was a narrow, dirt and gravel unfinished roadway, was widened and improved. Scientists’ Cliffs reflected the important and transformative role played by automotive transportation in the development of residential and vacation communities.³

Flippo Gravatt worked closely with the early builders and contractors in the construction and development of Scientists’ Cliffs. The development features common spaces (including the Chestnut Cabin, as well as a later swimming pool addition to replace a swimming hole), an ecological natural style (slightly different from the more deliberate picturesque movement) and a cohesive building type. In addition, information regarding Flippo Gravatt, who served as founder and developer, as well as the social goals of the founding community, allows Scientists’ Cliffs to be considered as an important site in the suburban development of the United States.

² Ibid, 3.

³ Gloria Schultz Leppi, “The Rope Swings and Other Early Memories of Scientists’ Cliffs,” n.d., 1, 4.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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"A Dream Realized: A History of the Scientists' Cliffs Association 1937-1987" unpublished.

Ames, David L. *Context and Guidelines for Evaluating America's Historic Suburbs for the National Register of Historic Places*. Draft. 1996. .

Chase, Susan, David Ames and Rebecca Siders 1992. *Suburbanization in the Vicinity of Wilmington, Delaware, 1880-1950+/-*. Newark, DE: Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering, University of Delaware.

Gloria Schultz Leppi "The Rope Swings and Other Early Memories of Scientists' Cliffs" n.d.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property approx. .5
Acreage of historical setting approx. .5
Quadrangle name Prince Frederick

Quadrangle scale: 1: 24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary of the surveyed property is marked as Tax Map 28A, parcel 22. The existing parcel is concurrent with the historic setting, and includes character-defining resources and setting which relate to the property's construction and evolution.

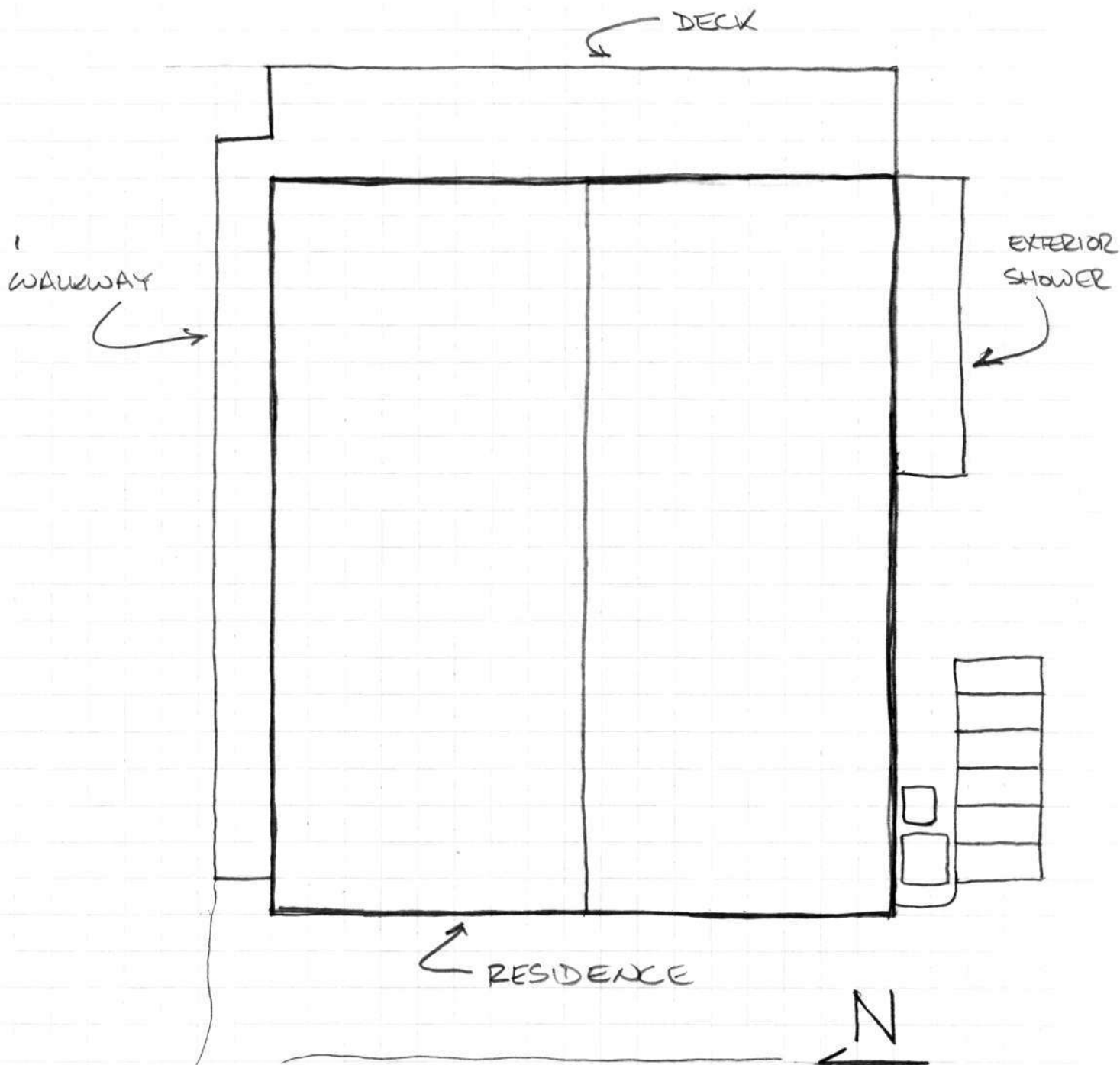
11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Caleb Christopher, Architectural Historian , revised by Craig Tuminaro, Architectural Historian		
organization	URS Corporation	date	3.1.03, 4.30.04
street & number	200 Orchard Ridge Drive, Suite 101	telephone	301.258.5897
city or town	Gaithersburg	state	MD

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

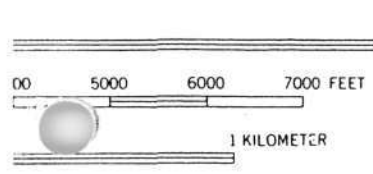
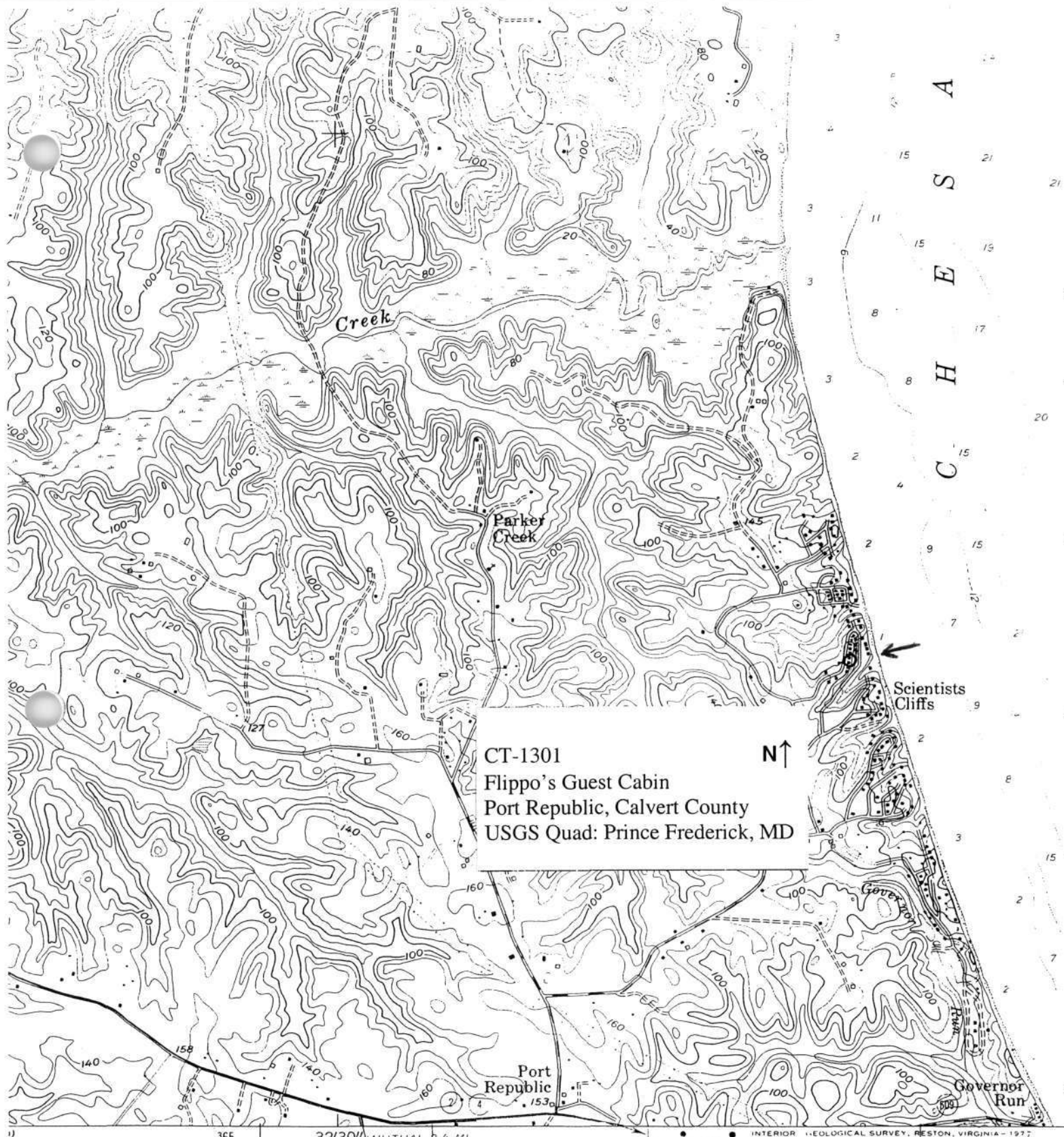
The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600

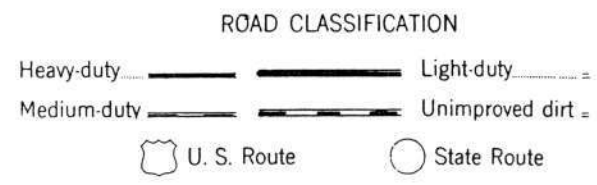


CT-1301
FLIPPO'S GUEST CABIN
PORT REPUBLIC, CALVERT COUNTY

RESOURCE SKETCH MAP
NOT TO SCALE



FEET
 DATUM OF 1929
 TUM IS MEAN LOW WATER
 LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER
 AT PLUM POINT



PRINCE FREDERICK
 SE/4 PRINCE FREDERICK 15' QUAD
 N 3830 — W 7630 / 7.5



5.65 BA 0ANX4N NNN- 9 0036

001

CT-1301

FLIPP'S GUEST CABIN

CAZUELT CO., MD

CAZUELT CHRISTOPHER

11/2002

NEGATIVE: MD SHPO

EAST FACADE

1 OF 4

66523



5.65 BA 0ANX1N NNN-14 0036

003

CT-1301

FLIPPO'S GUEST CABIN

CAVART CO., MD

CAVART CHRISTOPHER

11/2002

NEGATIVE: MD SHPO

SOUTH ELEVATION

2 OF 4

66525



5.65 BA 0ANX1N NNN- 9 0036

002

CT-1301

FURRO'S GUEST CABIN

CAZUBET CO., MD

CALLER CHRISTOPHER

11/2002

NEGATIVE: MD STCPO

NORTH ELEVATION

* PARTS OF EAST

66524 3 of 4



5.65 BA 0ANX4N NNN- 1 0036

008

CT-1301

FURPO'S GUEST CABIN
CAWERT CO, MD
CAWERT, CHRISTOPHER
11/2002

NEGATIVE: MD SHPO

NORTH ELEVATION

4 OF 4

66530